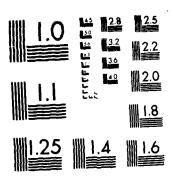
UNSOLICITED ADVICE ON THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY (II) ARMY MAR COLL CARLISLE BARRACES FA AD-A193 973 1/1 UNCLASSIFIED F/G 15/3 END /¹³/89



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Clausewitz concludes by proposing revision of the procedures and organization of the federal government, designed to logically organize the formulation and execution of national security strategy, involving the People and the Congress throughout. This revised organization is also designed to insure constant integration and coordination of all the elements of national power.

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USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM

UNSOLICITED ADVICE ON THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

A Group Study Project by Lieutenant Colonel James J. Montano and Lieutenant Colonel Dennis H. Long

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Colonel David Jablonsky Project Advisor

U.S. Army War College Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013 30 March 1988

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ABSTRACT

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General Karl von Clausewitz (RIP), concerned with the current state of US foreign policy and national strategy, studies the last four decades of American history and provides the new President with his findings. Clausewitz perceives severe deficiencies arising from three major problems:

first, an unprecedented growth in the ability and willingness of the American people to influence the action of their government.

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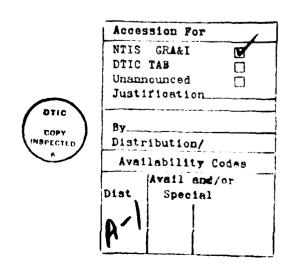
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Thanks to the unselfish comments and time of these extraordinary officers, this manuscript was significantly improved. Any virtues of the resulting product are attributable to them. Any shortcomings are solely the responsibility of the authors.



UNSOLICITED ADVICE ON THE SUBJECT OF NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

"You military professionals must know something about strategy, tactics, and logic... economics and history. You must know everything you can about military power, and you must understand that few of the important problems of our time have, in the final analysis, been resolved by military power alone. You must be more than servants of national policy. You must be prepared to play a constructive role in the development of national policy, a policy which protects our interests, and our society, and the peace of the world."

John F. Kennedy 1961

20 January 1989

The President of the United States The White House Washington

Dear Mister President,

Let me open by congratulating you on the day of your inauguration. I suspect you are beginning to feel the full weight of the duty and responsibility of your high office. You certainly face a term filled with challenges unprecedented in human history.

It is the fearsomeness of these challenges which impels me to transmit to you this letter of advice on the matter of national security strategy. I suspect you are a bit skeptical of any advice from a classical soldier, who never lived for even one day in a democracy, and has been in his final reward for over a century and a half. I cannot blame you. Nevertheless, I believe I have something to offer. I have had a great deal of time on my hands to study the past four decades of American Policy. Although the "experts" (Government Officials, Military Professionals, Academics and Congressmen) of your time have written prolifically on the subject, I thought you might appreciate the objective views of one from a less sophisticated time.

I have developed a great respect and admiration for your country, but I am very anxious just now for its future well-being. I fear your political and governmental system has developed in an unbalanced manner, leaving you vulnerable to your enemies. I feel a special obligation to be of assistance since your enemies have exploited my book On War as one basis for their strategic methods. I Many of my ideas from that volume can be of aid to you also, but I fear the unedited state in which I left it makes them somewhat inaccessible. Written as they were for a much simpler era, these ideas may also appear to lack relevance to your much more complex world. And yet, if you will suffer to read my entire offering, I believe you will agree that those musty old pages hold some lessons which, when properly updated, should be critically important to the safety and longevity of the nation you now lead and the nations which look to yours for leadership.

My view of your current problem

There can be no doubt that your national strategic system is in disarray. From Vietnam to the Iran-Contra scandal, the picture of America has certainly not been one of a nation which identifies its interests and then effectively employs its resources in a resolute and coordinated manner to achieve them. To the contrary, the strategic image of the United States has been one of a declining power, becoming more and more inconsistent, unreliable, and vacillating.

An objective observer of the last four decades of American history in the international arena finds more grounds for pessimism than for optimism. There has seldom been a more powerful nation with such a poorly demonstrated ability to use its power wisely. To most of the world, your war in Vietnam signaled not only the beginning of a decline in national power but a growing inability to define national purpose and to reach a durable consensus on how to achieve it. Little has transpired in the years since to alter that impression. The constant struggle between every President and every Congress over the "war powers" and the frequent reversals of policy, as in the case of support for the rebels in Nicaragua, solidify your unfortunate reputation.

Indeed, President Reagan's Blue Ribbon Panel on Defense Management, chaired by David Packard, reached some similarly distressing conclusions:

"There is no national system whereby the executive branch and the Congress reach coherent and enduring agreement on national military strategy, the forces to carry it out and the funding that should be provided in light of the overall economy and competing claims on national resources." ²

The members of your Congress see the problem, though they are not yet sure of a solution. Representative Ike Skelton wrote:

"Over the past few years, I have received correspondence from a number of people who have been intimately involved with national security matters. They sincerely believe that a failure of national leadership, both political and military, has occurred with respect to the formulation of national strategy."

And Senator Sam Nunn who has held extensive and very interesting hearings on the national security strategy process has said:

"At this stage, I have serious questions about the clarity, coherence, and consistency of our current strategy. ... I have been raising these questions for several years and have not gotten any answers."

Your recent expedition to the Persian Gulf fits the same mold. Not only did the executive and legislature continue open conflict over control, but even within the executive, then-Secretary of the Navy James Webb expressed confusion over the purpose and goals of the effort. 5

"No one starts a war – or rather no one in his senses should do so – without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it."

On War, Book Eight, Chapter Two

This "tradition" of internal conflict within the executive branch of government is an especially disturbing trend of long standing. I find across most administrations a normal routine of divided and disputed control over strategic decisionmaking and operations among the State Department, the White House staff, the National Security Council staff, and the Defense Department . Three of your Secretaries of State have resigned as a result of such struggles: William Rogers in 1973, Cyrus Vance in 1980, and Alexander Haig in 1982. 6 And in fact, conflict between the Secretaries of Defense and State has been the rule for most of the last forty years. 7

There are those in your country who see this disorganized approach to national security strategy as some sort of virtue of a democracy, or at worst, a price which must be paid in order to have free institutions. While I admit to being inexperienced in the exercise of democracy, I do hope to convince you that the process must and can be improved without damaging the free nature of American government.

Indeed, it is highly likely that, without improvement in the planning and execution of national security strategy, those free institutions will have difficulty surviving long into the next century.

My views on why the problem exists

A nation guides its actions by first identifying its national interests and objectives - those compelling needs which seem worth the use of power to achieve. Once these interests and objectives are determined, then a concept is formulated to use the instruments of national power to achieve or protect those interests. These elements of national power include much more than just the armed forces. National power can be exerted through diplomacy, economic assistance or pressure, and a wide array of informational actions, ranging from propaganda dissemination to the influence of public opinion. These instruments of national power should not be employed in isolation, but must rather be integrated so that the additive effect and sequential timing of their impact maximize the likelihood of achieving national objectives.

The theoretical ideas necessary for understanding and curing the ills of your strategic process are contained in my book, On War. However, each of these ideas requires some revision to account for the passage of a century and a half of history.

I must begin by revising my view of the very nature of war itself. Twentieth century war is no longer limited to the clash of armed forces on the battlefield. Modern nations now exert their power in a wide variety of ways to include diplomacy, economic action, and propaganda, as well as threatening the use of force. While I was among the first to recognize the linkage of military force to diplomacy, I admit that I did not grasp the critical importance that these other elements of national power were to assume.

"...War is only a branch of political activity;...
war is simply a continuation of political intercourse,
with the addition of other means."

On War, Book Eight, Chapter Six

War in your day must be thought of as a constant and continuous competition between you and your enemies. This modern warfare employs a wide variety of instruments and methods, in which the stakes are national interests, the most important of which is your national survival. I think that your country has really been at war in this broader sense through all the years since World War II. It is a large part of your problem that very few of your citizens see it that way. Indeed your predecessor was moved to write in January of 1988, "Unfortunately, America's national power is sometimes thought of only in coercive or military terms." 8

The first key to coherent national security strategy, then, is to think of war as a long-term, perhaps never-ending, competition with nations whose interests conflict with yours. This competition is a process which integrates the employment of armed force, economic power, propaganda, diplomacy, nation building, and every other source of national power to gain advantage.

But concepts will never in themselves after the actions of men and nations. To effect change, it is necessary to examine the environment and the nature of the domestic players, who actually devise and execute the nation's strategy. In my day, I based this examination on a model which I called the "remarkable trinity." I held at that time that the trinity consisted of: (1) the government, (2) the Rrmy, and (3) the people. The roles of each of the elements of the trinity changed significantly during my lifetime, and those roles continue to develop in your own time.

The Remarkable Trinity

"A Theory that ignores any one of them or seeks to fix an arbitrary relationship between them would conflict with reality to such an extent that for this reason alone it would be totally useless."

On War, Book One, Chapter One

Immediately prior to my service as a Prussian officer, warfare was almost entirely the purview of the King and his professional army. The people saw themselves as removed from the fortunes of the "King's wars." It was the King who determined the national interests and the national security strategy; the Army, which executed it.9

The French Revolution and the Wars of Napoleon fundamentally changed this arrangement, with the rise of the "nation in arms." In addition to removing most of the existing limitations on the scope and ferocity of war, this new participation of the people marked the beginning of the gradual growth of influence by the people in the planning and conduct of war.¹⁰

This influence by the people over the other elements of the trinity has continued to increase, and it is in this area that your most serious problems begin. Today's paralysis in strategy stems from unprecedented growth in the power of the American people over the day-to-day functioning of their government. Let me hasten to declare that I do not consider this to be a bad thing in and of itself. I have become an admirer of democracy. However, as I will argue later, this is a growth in power which has not been accompanied by necessary growth in leadership and wisdom.

This increase in the immediate power of the electorate has resulted from several factors. First, the electronic media inform people more rapidly and in greater detail than ever before of what their

government is doing and is <u>intending to do.</u> Second, the electorate is astonishingly more capable of immediately communicating its approval of or displeasure at actual or contemplated action by its elected leaders. This is due in some part to the proliferation of the media including the use of the telephone to register reaction with government officials; but the bulk of this expanded influence seems to be due to the massive growth and popularity of opinion polls. These two developments produce a populace who are aware of government action in great detail and are able to express their desires before decisions can be made. I believe your elected officials spend less time on considering what is right and best for the nation, than they spend on asking their constituents what they wish to have done.

In theory, this situation need not be a problem, provided that the electorate wields its power in a manner guided by the long-term interests of the nation. The overwhelming evidence seems to indicate, however, that national interest is rarely discussed in the formation of public opinion. Instead, public opinion on national issues, which in many cases becomes national policy, is often based on short-term, personal, and local self-interest.

I do not believe this state of affairs is to be blamed on the people, but rather on the second element of the trinity - the government. The role of government faced with a highly informed and influential populace should be to lead and not merely to follow. This leadership should begin with the identification and formulation of national interests. This must be more than a case of mere articulation.

It must be a process of discussion and debate and consensus building. Bypassing this step would be a great mistake, since popular support for any unpleasant but necessary future action must be derived from commitment to a commonly supported interest. Indeed, as you learned in Vietnam, even identifying your interests is not enough. The nation also must decide how much it is willing to sacrifice in protecting or achieving them. The American people will not follow you in sacrificing to achieve a goal unless they are convinced that the objective is <u>indeed vital</u> and is <u>worth the cost.</u>

The role of Congress in consensus building is key. However, my observation is that Congressmen, as well as the electorate, are traditionally focused on single issues, usually domestic issues. Mister President, this political environment forces you to focus in the same areas as your legislature and your citizens. You, Sir, have a critical role of leadership and education to play in raising this focus to critical matters of national security strategy. You will certainly need help in integrating and coordinating your strategic vision for your countrymen.

The inability of the American people and government to meet this challenge plays into the hands of your enemies. The Soviets cannot help but observe that the United States lacks a working consensus of where its interests lie, and what it is willing to sacrifice in defending them. They must particularly appreciate that decisions are often made in ignorance of long-term implications. I must say that they have used these weaknesses against you masterfully. For forty years, they have succeeded in extending their campaigns of expansion over

long periods of time. As a result, the American people have seldom felt sufficiently threatened at any single moment to resist. It is true, there were miscalculations in Korea, the Cuban missile crisis, and Vietnam; but in every case the passage of time restored the American preference for avoiding immediate unpleasantness and for disregarding long-term interests. Soviet expansion has skillfully avoided any appearance of directly threatening the American people.

In *On War*, I recognized that the will of the people may serve to limit the sacrifices that will be made to achieve any political aim. Your enemies have masterfully determined the limits of American will and are patiently conducting their campaign against you within those boundaries.

"Since war is not an act of senseless passion, but is controlled by its political object, the value of this object must determine the sacrifices to be made for it in magnitude and also in duration. Once the expenditure of effort exceeds the value of the political object, the object must be renounced and peace must follow."

On War, Book One, Chapter Two

Unfortunately, your problems are not limited to the first two elements of the remarkable trinity. Of course, with my new broader

view of war in the twentieth century, this third element needs to be broadened as well. My "Army" has become "Executors" in your day. Executors include every person and agency involved in planning for and actually executing the use of national power. The list would include the entire Department of Defense, Department of State, National Security Council, Central Intelligence Agency, and U.S. Information Agency, as well as portions of the Departments of Treasury, Justice, Commerce, and Agriculture.

Even if this large group of executors were well organized and coordinated, they would have a very difficult time executing the ill-defined and mercurial strategy produced by the people and the government. But unfortunately, they are not well organized or coordinated. In fact, the organization of the executive branch is better suited to the seventeenth century view of strategy than today's. Our broader view of war calls for the instruments of power to be used in concert to support and compliment each other in achieving national goals. Instead, your executing agencies have no common authority except yourself.

The need to unify the planning and execution efforts of the executor agencies has been recognized for many years, but it has not been solved. The National Security Council, particularly its permanent staff, was meant to be a remedy for this. However, it has had a mixed record at best, and has only been effective under strong National Security Advisors like Or. Henry Kissinger, who insured unity of effort by assuming some of the authority of members of the cabinet. 11 More

characteristic of the National Security Council's weakness as a unifying influence has been the open conflict between former Secretary of Defense Weinberger and Secretary of State Schultz over the "Weinberger Doctrine," which specified a set of conditions required for U.S. armed forces to be committed to combat.¹² Likewise, when the same two Secretaries disapproved of arms dealings with Iran, the National Security Council Staff felt compelled to become an operational agency.

At a more routine level, the executor agencies continue to plan separately, operate independently, and submit separate budgets in an age when the opposition has all the advantages. It is imprudent, to say the least, to accept such inefficiencies, when the Soviets are enjoying, for the moment, a remarkable trinity with no ambiguity over interests, and no meddlesome intrusion of their people into strategy formulation or execution. I am certainly no admirer of your communist enemies, but their national security strategy formulation process is indeed simpler than yours.

To a military man like me, the National Security Council appears to be unworkable. On a routine basis, it calls for relatively junior members of your staff to obtain continuous consensus among cabinet members far senior to them and subordinate only to you. It is not unlike asking a captain to combine and coordinate the efforts of a flock of colonels. It can happen, but if it does, the captain is indeed exceptional, and deserves to be a colonel himself.

Mister President, clearly you are organized by function. The functional approach is wise only when planning and execution require little integration and coordination. The system places you in the position of the integrator and coordinator of the functional departments and the instruments of national power they supervise and manage. Due to the political environment and the interest in domestic single issues previously mentioned, it would seem that the demands on you are extreme, to say the least. Although many have said that this system is effective, I maintain that when effective it has been due to extraordinary personalities and not due to any virtues of the organization.

Your executors in the modern version of my "remarkable trinity" lack unified command in their application of the instruments of national power. Somehow, that unity must be achieved if you are to be successful as a nation.

My proposed solution

This brings me to the part of my letter, in which I am least comfortable - the solution. My experience in life gave me little familiarity with the institutions of a democracy, and that leads me to doubt in some measure my ideas for improving your ability to prevail in the strategic struggle. Therefore, I have tried to recommend only those measures that are similar to procedures, organizations, and systems that have already succeeded in your society.

The Remarkable Trinity

"Our task therefore is to develop a theory that maintains a valance between these three tendencies, like an object suspended between three magnets."

On War, Book One, Chapter One

My recommendations are aimed at achieving the following aims:

- -identification and consensus on national interests.
- -consensus on the limits of sacrifice for each interest.
- -long range planning and resourcing to achieve interests.
- -unified integration of all executing agencies in both planning and execution of national strategy.

My recommendations consist of:

- a recurring formal public process of identification, sacrifice assessment and congressional approval of national interests.
- -a new cabinet level department charged with the formulation of national interest statements, unified strategic planning, coordinating execution, and assessing success.

I have discarded at the outset any idea of limiting the influence of the people over their government. Even if it were possible, it would

be unwise in a democracy to set any precedent of reducing the power of the people.

"...Once barriers - which in a sense consist only in man's ignorance of what is possible - are torn down, they are not so easily set up again."

On War, Book Eight, Chapter Three

I would begin by establishing a biennial dialogue with your Congress and the people on what your interests are and what you are willing to sacrifice to achieve them. This seems to me to be no different than your budget process elevated to a higher plane. You should send your own statement to Congress with the request that it be accepted or modified, then passed as a law or joint resolution. Involve the people early. Use your access to the media to get the people interested and in touch with their representatives. Stress that their taxes will be spent and risks will be taken based on the guidance of the final product.

The major benefit of this process will be to extend the horizon of the national dialogue, and thus break out of the short-term attitude which characterizes your policy. It will be much harder to delete an interest publicly from your submission than the current option of simply ignoring it. As a result, the electorate and the Congress will be forced to address long-term ramifications of short term policies and actions. In the end, I predict that the outcome will be a growth in your people's

awareness and wisdom that will match their already expanded influence in policy.

I do not believe, however, that the executive branch, as now organized, is capable of leading this process from formulation, through planning, into execution. Reorganization to some degree is necessary. In this regard, there are sufficient precedents in recent American history to identify a structural change which will work. These precedents involve:

- the National Security Council,
- the overseas country team concept, and
- the unification of the Department of Defense .

Although the National Security Council has enjoyed a mixed record of effectiveness, Dr. Kissinger's tenure as National Security Advisor demonstrates that the diverse executors of strategy can be made to act in concert if there is a strong, full-time unifier; who enjoys the full confidence and support of the President.

Each administration appears to approach the National Security Council differently. Many views of the matter exist. President Carter's National Security Advisor, Zbigniew Brezezinski has said, "I think that the system would work best if the practical coordination and the definition of the strategic direction would originate from the President's assistant for national security affairs, who would then tightly coordinate and control the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the director of the

Central Intelligence Agency as a team, with them knowing that he was doing so on the president's behalf." 13 On the other hand, Or. Henry Kissinger stated," Though I did not think so at the time, I have become convinced a President should make the Secretary of State his principal adviser end use the National Security Adviser primarily as a senior administrator and coordinator to make certain that each significant point of view is heard. If the Security Adviser becomes active in the development and articulation of policy- he must inevitably diminish the Secretary of State and reduce his effectiveness." 14 What is consistent with both men is their strong desire for a single dominant controller of strategic planning and execution below the presidential level. I support this view with the soldier's ancient reverence for the principle of unity of command.

At the operational level, an equally successful precedent has been demonstrated by the country team, in which all the United States agencies within a foreign country are controlled and integrated by the Ambassador. Here too, the efforts are orchestrated according to a single plan calculated to achieve national goals not just the goals of a single agency.

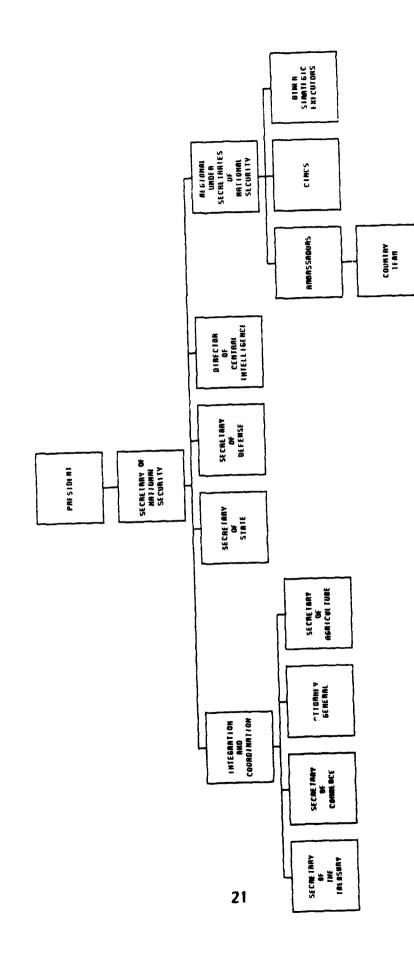
These two working concepts suggest strongly that the answer to effective execution of national security strategy lies in organizational unification of the the executing agencies. Fortunately, we know that this is a workable approach, because it has already succeeded for the last forty years in the unification of the Department of Defense. Faced with a very similar problem of unifying the efforts of the armed

services without requiring constant recourse to the President himself, Congress established a single cabinet post responsible for the military departments. I know that this solution is still maturing, but it works, and it has improved with every major evolutionary modification since 1947. It was strongly opposed by many at its inception, but today there are few who would advocate returning to separate service departments.

Following the lead of these three precedents, I propose an organization whose structure I have sketched below. It will certainly be at least as controversial as the creation of the Department of Defense was in the late 1940's. I see this Department of National Security as a replacement for the National Security Council. It would assume control of the Departments of State and Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the rest of the intelligence community. The agencies under the new department would maintain their current identities and functions but their political chiefs would cease to be cabinet members, acquiring instead much the same status as the military service secretaries enjoy today. Additionally, the Department of National Security would integrate and coordinate the efforts of all other cabinet departments, which are associated with national power in the international arena.

As you can see, I recommend that the unification of responsibility be implemented in the "field" as well as in Washington. Since strategic plans will often require precise sequencing of efforts from the various executing agencies, the chain of command will now run from you to the

My Proposed Organization



Other Cabinet Departments and Agencies would continue to report directly to the President

Secretary of National Security to the regional undersecretaries and thence to the Ambassadors and Commanders-in-Chief of the regional unified combatant commands. Where large military forces are not involved you will probably wish to retain the country team organization under control of Ambassadors reporting to the Undersecretaries.

The Commanders-in-Chief of your unified commands would be under direct command of the Undersecretary of National Security for their region, but will continue to rely on the Department of Defense for support. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff would become a principal advisor to the President and the Secretary of National Security.

The Secretary of National Security and his staff must have a firm command of the full range of national strategic requirements and capabilities. The Secretary of National Security should be responsible for the following:

- formulation of the draft national interest resolution for your submission to Congress.
- -development of a short, middle, and long-term plan for achieving declared interests.
- -administration of a unified process for strategic planning, programming, budgeting, acquisition, and operational planning.
- -preparation of an annual assessment of strategic success in achieving interests to be issued as a part of your State of the Union Address.

-command and control of all strategic action under your direction.

The action I recommend will be very difficult to implement. I ask you, though, as you ponder its benefits to look at it through the eyes of your nation's enemies. They will most certainly fear such a reform. They will be distressed by the promise of improved focus on long-term national interests among the people and their government. They will see a threat to their strategy directed at the creeping erosion of U.S. interests. They will certainly be sobered by the prospect of unified planning and coordinated effort in the execution of American national security strategy. They will recognize that national resources will be more efficiently used to frustrate their aims.

At the same time, the image you project to your allies will be clearer, more consistent, and better understood than ever before.

But the most important consequence of this revision may be in the restoration of the focus of your people on national values and national purpose. This process will force each American to assess the values and character of the nation. It will evoke discussion of national obligation to other peoples and to future generations. Most importantly it will provide a vehicle for acting on the conclusions. The end result will be the emergence of an increasingly responsible national character with sufficient long-term outlook to act and to make a difference.

I wish you well in the office you assume today and I thank you for considering the ideas in this letter. If I may be of further assistance I am at your disposal.

1 remain

Your ob'd't Servant.

Karl von Clausewitz

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Michael Howard, <u>Clausewitz</u> (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 66.
- National Security Strategy, Hearings before Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 100th Congress, January-February 1987, p. 3.
- ³ Representative Ike Skelton, "U. S. Military Strategy Needs Focus," <u>Defense News</u>, 18 January 88, p.24.
- ⁴ National Security Strategy, Hearings before Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, 100th Congress, January-February 1987, p. 2.
- ⁵ Jim McGee, "Naval Secretary Questioned U.S. Persian Gulf Policies," <u>The Washington Post</u>, 6 September 1987, p. A 30.
- ⁶ Barry Rubin, <u>Secrets of State</u> (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 250.
- ⁷ John M. Collins, <u>U.S. Defense Planning: A Critique</u> (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982), pp. 96-99. See especially Figure 12. <u>Collaboration Between Secretaries of State and Defense.</u> This excellent figure traces the relationships between all pairs of Defense and State Secretaries from 1947 to 1982, placing them along a spectrum from "partnership" to "open warfare."
- ⁸ Ronald Reagan, <u>National Security Strategy of The United States</u>, (Washinton: Government Printing Office, January 1988), p. 7.
- ⁹ Howard, p. 48.
- ¹⁰ <u>Ibid.</u>, pp. 48-49.
- ¹¹Harrison Donnelly, <u>National Security Council</u>, Congressional Quarterly Editorial Research Report, January 1987, p. 23.

- ¹² Phillip Taubman, "The Shultz-Weinberger Feud," <u>The New York Times Magazine</u>, 14 April 1985, p. 91.
- ¹³ Interview with Zbigniew Brzezinski<u>, The Washington Quarterly.</u> Winter 1982.
- ¹⁴Donnelly, p. 22.

